

PLANNING FUNCTIONAL AREA ANALYSIS

PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide the FAA Team's deliberations, conclusions, and recommendations to the RMB for their consideration and further action as appropriate.

This report is in response to direction given by the RMB at their 27-28 October 1998 meeting: "...review of the Planning process in NWD with an objective to enhance and improve the planning process within the Project Management Business Process, and the need to preserve technical expertise". This is documented in the minutes of that meeting (enclosure 1, par. 12)

Guidance used includes:

- follow-on guidance provided by RMB Co-Chairman, Mike White, in the form of a handout given the FAA Team Leader (enclosure 2), which in part states the following: "Conduct a Functional Area Analysis (FAA) of the planning process in NWD to determine how to preserve and enhance the planning capabilities of NWD consistent with the Project Management Business Process...", with the objectives to: "ensure every district is responsible for the planning process, determine how best to preserve and enhance planning process for each district consistent with PMBP, provide recommendation on planning process improvements to include business process improvements, staffing, organizational, regional, and training considerations",
- guidance provided in the 17 November 1998 memorandum by BG Griffin to the District Commanders, subject: " Planning and the Project Management Business Process (PMBP)" (enclosure 3), which states in part: "...need to maintain an effective planning process and robust planning organization in each district sized to workload using regional planning capabilities external to the district as appropriate", and " an interdisciplinary Chief of Planning reporting to the Deputy for Programs and Project Management will lead the Planning organization"
- guidance received from Logan Creswell of NWD-HR and Joe Levy, Deputy to Susan Duncan, CEHR, relative to conditions for an interdisciplinary Chief of Planning (enclosures 4 and 5, respectively),
- guidance provided Mike White from Fred Caver and Susan Duncan relative to Chief of Planning being a CP-18 interdisciplinary position (enclosure 6), and Mike's comments in part: "...the Chief of Planning has the primary responsibility for formulation, evaluation, and policy compliance of the project in its development [feasibility phase]. Also the Chief of Planning is the primary responsible SR leader in the

District for guiding the project Team through the planning phase of any project.”

- Mike White’s suggestion: “I feel your group (FAA) needs to examine the issue of the Chief of Planning representation as a member of the PRB or Corporate Board. I would think that would be a given.” (enclosure 7).

FUNCTION AND STRUCTURE

The functions that are essentially unique to the planning process are listed in the table below. The functions are divided into the traditional planning elements of plan formulation, economics and environmental resources. Functions assigned to the **Planning** (division, branch, or section) office include Planning policy and guidance, marketing of the Civil Works programs, program integration to meet customer needs, and QA/QC. This office would include **Plan Formulation** (branch, section, or team) **Economics** (branch, section, or team), and the **Environmental** (branch, section, or team). The major functions of each of office are detailed in the table.

Planning Office Planning Policy Guidance Civil Program Marketing Program Integration to meet customer needs (How to apply authorities/programs) QA/QC		
Plan Formulation	Economics	Environmental
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Planning Process • Public Involvement • Set Planning objectives • Define existing condition • Define future with and without project conditions • Problem Identification • Development of Alternatives • Trade off analysis • Project Authorization Document, Division Commanders Notice, Chief of Engineer’s Report • Technical Integration (integrating the various technical products into a report and a project) • Facilitate review process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Analysis • Optimization • NED analysis • Cost Allocation • Regional Economic Analysis • Financial Capability • Damage Assessment • Social Impact Analysis • Project Accomplishments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Analysis (EA) • Environmental Impact Analysis (EIS) • Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) • Record of Decision (ROD) • ESA Section 7 Consultation • HEP analysis • Cultural Resources (SHPO, etc) • Native American Support • Government to Government consultations with Native Americans • Research (fish, etc.) • USFW Coordination Act • Compliance and documentation required by State laws

An interdisciplinary Planning Chief would lead this group, which would be responsible for the planning process, and the Chief would also be responsible for guiding Project Teams through the planning phase of any project. The Planning Chief would report to the Deputy for Programs and Project Management.

The Team concluded that in order to be a robust and optimal organization, the Planning organization must include plan formulation, economics, and environmental elements. The importance of the inclusion of plan formulation and economic evaluation skills rests on the very close relationship of plan formulation and economics for the traditional structural plan formulation. The Team recognizes the current trend towards environmental initiatives by the Administration and the Corps to encourage environmental restoration projects under Sections 1135 and 206, as well as General Investigations, and acknowledges that the formulation of these kinds of projects relies on environmental outputs in-lieu of economic. This requires an even closer relationship between the environmentalists and plan formulators, similar to that of the economists. These recent developments tend to add credence to the need of a full service planning entity that includes both the environmental and economic functions.

Other alternative structures to fit potential unique needs of district staffing or workloads were considered. For example, it would be possible that as a minimum, the Planning organization, in addition to the Chief, could have the plan formulation function, with the economic and environmental functions located in a technical organization in an Engineering Division or Branch. Additionally, the Planning organization could include the plan formulation and economic functions, with the environmental function in a technical organization in Engineering. However, neither of these two alternatives appeared to serve the fundamental objectives of preserving and enhancing a robust Planning organization, as well as that which included all three functions of plan formulation, economics and environmental resources.

Virtual teaming to utilize resources external to a district is an option and is available to any Planning organization. Among the districts, virtual teaming is being used anytime the capability of one of these functional areas (inclusive of contractor capability) is exceeded. It is important that in addition to a Chief of Planning, each district should also have at least one plan formulator, economist, and environmentalist on staff in order to communicate the level of and nuances of the technical services being obtained from another district (or an AE firm). These staff members are also considered essential for communication with the sponsor in formulating a plan to meet customer expectations and budget, which cannot be effectively accomplished long distance.

REGIONALIZATION

The FAA Team deliberated over the merits of establishing regional centers of expertise to perform Civil Works planning functions. Such regional centers can provide the opportunity to consolidate expertise within a specific discipline to provide a cost effective means to serve our customers, while maintaining broad capabilities within the region. At this time, the Team believes most NWD Districts have sufficiently strong workloads to allow a full compliment of staff for each of the three primary planning elements (PF, EC, ER), and may not benefit from any regionalization plan. In fact, our Corps customers (project sponsors) could be adversely impacted by the regionalization of functions.

Walla Walla District, however, has a smaller traditional planning (GI, CA, & EA) workload than the other NWD Districts. Its traditional program can only support a limited planning organization, one which could include a Planning Chief, 2-3 staff within a plan formulation unit, 1-2 economists, and 2-3 environmental staff. Such a structure would meet the basic objectives of the division, as it will provide Walla Walla with a robust planning organization that is sized to the workload. Regionalization of the Planning function at Walla Walla District was considered by the Team as a potential means of providing greater depth and broad-based experience in addressing critical planning issues. This is not necessary, however, because in recent years the district has been very innovative in using the total Corps capabilities (the virtual Corps) in obtaining needed planning experience to conduct its planning program. This is particularly evident for planning studies in support of the district fish program, where the district has taken advantage of capabilities within other districts, division, and HQ. The use of Corps-wide capabilities appears to be working well for Walla Walla District, providing greater flexibility and capability than the establishment of regional centers. As a result of the above, there is no need for development of regional centers at this time.

ENHANCED CAREERS

The issue of keeping good people in the Corps is universal. However, it is worth reiterating from the planning perspective. There must be adequate and fulfilling growth and development opportunities as well as recognition of grade parity amongst Planners and Project Managers. GS-13 technical positions have been established within Planning at several Corps districts. NWD Districts should, when appropriate, establish similar positions.

Key to maintaining planning technical expertise is the recognition of its value. A potential option for “valuing” planning expertise would be to establish technical expert positions at the GS-13 level that are non-supervisory within the formulation, economics, and environmental areas. This would provide career progression for staffs that are truly experts in a given field. These type of positions could provide technical review capability, be assigned highly

complicated projects, and assist in the overall mentoring and development of staff.

It is recommended that the division and districts collectively review existing “Formulation Specialist” and other Technical Specialist positions throughout the Corps. Where applicable, these positions should be implemented within the districts. These positions are critical to maintaining a strong Planning function consistent with the PMBP.

An additional area for consideration is planning recognition. Although there are team and individual awards nationally for planning excellence, there is currently no counterpart at the NWD level. The Team suggests that planning achievement awards be also established at the division level that could recognize excellent individual and team accomplishment in the planning programs. This can be compatible with the national awards program, and would provide needed regional recognition and provide positive feedback to the individuals who work in the planning field within NWD.

BUSINESS PROCESSES

Potential business process improvements were identified and briefly discussed. The FAA Team believes that the area of business process improvements should be on-going, and in that regard, the Team will continue to review opportunities for additional improvements. This is especially pertinent, since districts are still in the implementation phase of their Project Management Business Processes. The following is a list of business process improvements related to planning and traditional planning-lead programs that should be considered.

Quarterly review meetings. Continue Planning Quarterly review meetings between division and district staff. These meetings provide an excellent forum to discuss potential or existing issues before they become “show stoppers”. They keep NWD up to speed on the district’s programs and also provide for improved relationships between division and district staff.

Quarterly Planning Chief Meetings. The Planning Chiefs and Continuing Authorities Program Managers should meet on a quarterly basis to discuss ongoing issues and share information. This will provide greater continuity, understanding and collaboration between the districts and enhance the one Corps team concept.

Pursue opportunities to delegate and stream line processes. Several existing business processes could be streamlined. The following are examples that should be given strong consideration:

Policy Conference. The Planning Chief at each District should be designated as the POC for all policy issues. The Division Policy POC will organize a policy conference annually to facilitate discussion of critical policy issues.

Delegate approvals of Section 905(b) reports. Currently, HQUSACE reviews and approves these documents. Given the limited detail and nature of these reports, approvals should be delegated to the division.

Delegate approval of PCA's that follow the model. Where PCA's are consistent with the model agreement, approval authority should be delegated to the division.

Certification of FCSA/PSP. CECW currently provides review and certification of FCSA/PSPs that are submitted during the Reconnaissance Phase of GI studies. It is recommended that the review and certification of these documents be delegated to the Division Commander. Such delegation would allow a more efficient transition to the feasibility phase of study, and would improve district program execution performance.

Environmental Programs. It is recommended that the approval authority for all reports and projects completed under the small project environmental authorities, Section 1135 and Section 206, be delegated to the division commander. Such delegation would expedite project planning and implementation by several months. It would also improve district performance in the area of program execution. This delegation of authority would be consistent with the program management of traditional CAP projects.

Establish a "Small Project" Model PCA. There is a need to establish a "Small Project" model PCA for Sections 1135 and 206 projects which have a Federal cost of \$300,000 or less. Current model PCA for Sections 1135 and 206 projects are 20+ pages whether the Federal cost is \$150,000 or \$5,000,000.

Evaluation and consideration of CAP PAT team recommendations. The National Continuing Authorities Process Action Team has submitted their report for HQUSACE review and approval. It has not been released to the field at this time. Recommendations from the report should be given careful consideration within NWD.

Further Evaluation of "NWD Civil Works Overall Cost and Schedule Change Approval Process". NWD draft guidance has been provided to the districts. The guidance should be modified to minimize "paper traffic" while still meeting the objectives of the guidance. It is recommended that the FAA team provide revisions to the document.

Concurrent Review of PRPs. Section 1135 and Section 206 Preliminary Restoration Plans should be given concurrent review from NWD and HQUSACE. Hopefully, this would expedite progress to the next phase of study.

Internet site for plan formulation. Good plan formulation is the key to development of successful projects that get approved for implementation. Innovative and creative approaches to formulation that are developed in the field need to be shared among planners, a form of Virtual Teaming. This can be easily accomplished through the Internet. A portion of a home page for Planning should be set up to collect brief write-ups that describe creative approaches to formulation.

The HQ Policy Office Review Branch (CECW-AR) should be asked to identify projects that should be highlighted. From this simple start, this Home Page would be developed to include other topics of interest, including a Planner's Bulletin Board. In addition, Internet / Email-based discussion groups could be established (similar to the Email discussion groups being established by CECW-AR and IWR) to address various plan formulation issues and problems. This could be open-ended with input from anyone interested in a topic. Topics could be placed on the discussion agenda by anyone who wished to explore an issue, to propose a plan formulation approach, or to solicit advice.

Build a regional list of AE contracts (IDT's) to enhance availability. The division office should develop and maintain a list of the available IDT's. The list should include a summary of the scope of services available under each IDT. This would improve the flexibility available to districts in executing their missions. It should be noted that currently it requires a fairly substantive effort to justify the use of the IDT outside of the hiring district. All IDT's should be specifically set up so that they can be used throughout the country.

Build work experience sharing into the district routine. Each district should develop a means to share the planning experience of projects among the people most involved in the planning process in the district. Some examples include "brown bag" sessions, round table discussions, weekly meetings or periodic sessions. This will have the effect of broadening the planning "experience" of all involved.

Lessons Learned. Use the Internet or email to share lessons learned through actual experiences. NWS has started doing more lessons learned with local sponsors and study teams to find ways to improve the process/system/interface.

CAP funding priorities - New Starts. The Corps needs to be more aggressive. New start studies receive the lowest priority each fiscal year when the CAP funds are allocated. Most districts have many projects on their backlog list of potential new starts. The priority of new starts needs to be increased, and

a commitment made early in the FY (or prior to the FY) to a greater number of new starts. While this would create the potential for over commitment of funds this would likely not occur in practice. Good management can overcome the potential for over commitment by reallocating slippage where it is needed. Waiting until late in the FY to accomplish this reallocation is not productive because it is too late for most districts to expend significant funds on study efforts at that point. Eliminating or dramatically reducing the backlog of new starts would improve the level of service to the nation because small projects that do not stack up well on a priority list will have new hope of being funded.

Team Approach to resolution of Policy Office Review Branch (CECW-AR) Comments. For review of Feasibility reports, CECW-AR provides review comments to CECW-P, who, in turn provides them through the division to the districts for resolution. It is recommended that “draft” comments be provided to the division and district and that the team members from HQUSACE, the division and district discuss the comments prior to sending out the formal review comments. Often, issues and comments can be quickly addressed and clarified over the phone and be eliminated from the formal process. This results in reduced paperwork, better understanding of the significant issues and improved team relations at all organizational levels.

Improve process for HQ Review of Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement (FCSA) and Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA). Currently, the district works with the sponsor to negotiate draft FCSAs and PCAs, attempting to minimize deviations from model agreements. The agreements are submitted with required attachments for HQ review. HQ reviews the documents and provides comments on the exceptions to model agreement. If HQ objects to the modified language, the process begins again with the district and Sponsor re-negotiating the agreements and re-submitting to HQ for review. This is not an efficient process. When such issues arise, an informal team of district, division, and HQ along with division and district reviewers should be established at an early stage in the process. This will involve the HQ, along with division and district decision-makers, in the negotiating process with the local sponsors, expedite the resolution of differing points of view and facilitate arriving at an acceptable agreement in a more efficient manner.

Web page for marketing the Civil Works Program. Each district should establish a Web page that contains information about each of the Civil Works authorities that are actively used to solve water resource related problems within their district boundary. At a minimum, a sample letter of interest, district points of contact, and information on typical project or products that can be developed should be included. Omaha District has a good example of such a site posted under “About our Services”, Civil Works” in the Omaha District home page. Collectively, the FAA Team should evaluate the available tools and ensure that all districts have information available covering the range of programs.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT TO PLANNING

Each district can take measures to maintain and enhance the planning function. Also, the support of the division and headquarters is essential. For the planning function to serve the districts well, consideration should be given to involving Planning in more activities than just the traditional Civil Works Planning missions. This will broaden the experience of the Planning group and improve the flexibility and capability of the group to serve the district and the Corps.

Regulatory Support. The regulatory offices at the district should fully utilize the district planning staff in the development EISs and for providing other key environmental analyses and support. Headquarters and division should encourage a close working relationship at the district level between the Planning staff and the regulatory offices. This will help the districts maintain a strong environmental technical expertise within each Planning organization.

Major rehabilitation and dam safety support. In the interest of efficiency, Planning staff should be an integral part of the planning and design for major rehabilitation and dam safety projects. These projects require decision documents that receive policy compliance review by CECW. The reports include plan formulation, trade-off analyses, NEPA compliance, and other tasks that are the function and expertise of the Planning staff.

Operations Division support. The HQ should encourage division and district to utilize the Planning staff when Planning functions are needed. This can broaden the experience available to the district planners. At the same time, it would increase efficiency at the districts.

Support to Other Missions. The district planning staff should be involved in the support the Military, HTRW and other programs where planning functions of economics, environmental analysis and plan formulation are a part of the mission.

TRAINING

Adequate training and developmental opportunities are critical to the preservation and enhancement of the Planning Process and planning technical expertise. The Team discussed a number of ideas including of the revival of the HQUSACE Planners and Project Managers Program. The following suggestions are presented for subsequent consideration and evaluation.

Reestablishment of centrally funded Long -Term Training in support of the Planning Process. Resurrection of the year long Planners and Project Managers Program or an abbreviated version would be ideal. The program offered project formulation, development and interdisciplinary skills and provided for integration of planners and project managers in a broad Corps-wide framework. However, unless the program is centrally funded, or given HQUSACE support (such as DLAMP), this suggestion will be difficult to implement.

Growth and development of junior planners. Long term stability in the Planning program requires that junior staff be continually recruited and trained in the planning process. Thus, there must be recognition and support within the districts for additional planning FTE, developmental training programs similar to our EIT programs and mentoring of junior planners. Emphasis and support for these activities should be in conjunction with the CP-18 Career Program Manager for each district.

Interagency Personnel Agreements (IPAs), Rotational and Developmental assignments. IPAs could be used in numerous ways to further enhance the Planning process and supplement resource needs. Personnel from other agencies, universities, and organizations can be brought in to work on projects and share their expertise with us (e.g. ecosystem restoration analysis). Conversely, staff can be sent to other agencies to gain experiences which then can be brought back to our organization and shared.

Developmental assignments within the Corps. Rotational and developmental assignments in other districts, HQUSACE, the Labs could also fulfill the same purpose. These activities should be encouraged and budgeted.

Recognition and support of conferences and workshops as training. Whether sponsored by HQUSACE or outside agencies, conferences offer significant opportunities for learning, training, and networking. This is important not only from the planning perspective, but as an outreach or business development activity to engage other agencies or discuss Corps authorities with potential sponsors. Training budgets should include contingencies to cover the cost of these often “short notice” events. The cost is usually considerably less than traditional training, which can expand training opportunities within a fixed training budget.

Encourage division - wide training. The FAA team recognizes the value of periodic division-wide workshops, and conferences to include HQUSACE participation, to discuss specific topics or issues (e.g. Watershed studies, Sec.1135/206 projects). In addition, one- to two- day training sessions such as the IWR Planning class and CAP workshops are also encouraged. The Team believes that more cross-district sharing of resources should be done, and thus enhance the “one door to the Corps” concept.

Video versions of training courses such as the Civil Works Orientation Course should also be shared within the division. VTC may also be useful in training or workshops.

Within the districts, brown bag sessions should be encouraged.

Although Prospect training is useful and encouraged, it often does not meet immediate and changing needs and tends to be costly in terms of travel and per diem.

Encourage division-wide use of the internet. Sharing project summaries, formulation issues, lessons learned and new techniques via the Web could be extremely useful. We would also encourage establishment of a similar site at the WLRC.

Encourage cross district technical review. Use of other districts to conduct technical reviews serves as a great learning and sharing exercise. More of this needs to occur within the division.

Increase emphasis on environmental training. As many studies and projects become more environmentally focused, planners must have training on NEPA, ESA, Environmental Law issues and evaluation techniques such as ICA/CEA. Some of these classes are offered through PROSPECT, others can be obtained as special training through local universities.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are summarized from the major topical areas of analysis presented above.

Structure and Function. After extensive evaluation of each district organizational structure and the needs for preserving and enhancing a robust planning capability, it was concluded that a full function planning entity is critical to success. A robust Planning organization should include plan formulation, economic and environmental functional elements, with an interdisciplinary chief reporting to the Deputy for Programs and Project Management (DPPM). The Planning Chief should also be a member of the PRB and the Corporate Board to assure effective representation of the Civil Works program, and be responsible for guiding Project teams through the planning phase of projects.

In order to provide the necessary and appropriate support to the districts, it is logical that a similar division organization is appropriate.

Regionalization. At this time, each of the NWD Districts has sufficient workload to support a full service planning organization with plan formulation, economic and environmental elements. When workload demands exceed district

capability, virtual teaming has been employed by drawing on technical, quality control review and managerial services from other districts within and outside NWD.

Enhanced Careers. The ability to keep the best people involved in planning activities requires growth and development activities as well as grade parity between planners and project managers. Technical specialist GS-13 positions would provide career progression for experts in a given technical area.

An additional consideration is the development of NWD Planning Achievement Awards to recognize excellent individual and team performance in planning programs.

Business Processes. A number of existing business processes should be streamlined. This includes delegated approval of a number of planning products such as PSP's, PCA's and 905(b) reports.

Quarterly review meetings between division and district staff should be continued to identify and resolve issues and problems early in the planning process. Quarterly Planning Chiefs meetings should be held to further develop the region wide team and share information.

The Chief of Planning at each district should be designated as the POC for all policy issues. A policy conference should be held annually to facilitate discussion of critical policy issues.

Internet applications of the districts should be expanded to include formulation and innovative planning examples, lessons learned and full service Civil Works Programs marketing information. An example is the current NWO Web site posted under "About our Services", "Civil Works".

The HQ Planning Division Home Page or Policy division site should include case studies of innovative and creative plan formulation efforts. A Planner's Bulletin Board for items of interest should be developed, and an Email discussion group to address various plan formulation issues and problems or new initiatives such as watershed planning should also be promoted.

The division office should provide and maintain a current list of AE contracts (IDT's). These contracts should be negotiated such that any Corps district can access the AE.

The negotiation of non-model cost-sharing agreements with sponsors should be modified to include face to face issue resolution/negotiation with the Washington Review Center decision-makers and the sponsor at an early stage in the negotiations.

Resolution of HQUSACE review comments should include informal discussions between the parties prior to sending formal comments to the field.

Organizational Support. The Planning entity should be involved in activities in addition to the traditional Civil Works missions in the interest of efficiency. This is particularly appropriate when available Planning skills and capabilities are duplicated by other district elements or acquired from other sources. This is specifically relevant in the areas of Regulatory, Dam Safety, Major Rehabilitation and Support for Others. This involvement would help sustain planning technical expertise.

Training. Adequate training and development opportunities are critical to the growth and enhancement of planning technical expertise.

Re-establishment of the Planners and Project Managers Program, if centrally funded, would be extremely effective in meeting these goals.

Developmental training programs should be supported at the district for junior planners, at districts, division, and HQ for more advanced planners and at the interagency level for planning executives.

The FAA Team recognizes the value of division-hosted workshops to discuss timely topics or issues (i.e., watershed studies, Sec. 1135/206 projects).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The FAA Team effort has provided a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve the planning process. The Team should provide oversight and guidance in the development of implementation plans, monitor the progress of the plan implementation, continue to seek further business process improvements, and advise the RMB accordingly. In addition, it can assist in facilitating some of the recommended actions.

District Actions

- Establish a robust Planning organization providing plan formulation, economic and environmental services with interdisciplinary Chief reporting to the DPPM.
- Develop Internet Web page for marketing Civil Works programs, both internally and to our current and potential partners. Expand to include innovative plan formulation examples and lessons learned. Also consider “brown bag” and round table discussions for same.
- Establish Planning Chief as the district policy POC.

- The district management team should assure available Planning capabilities are utilized effectively in district program areas such as Regulatory, Dam Safety, Major Rehabilitation and Support for Others.
- Continue virtual teaming activities to supplement use of resources.
- Develop training programs for junior planners.
- Make use of Interagency Personnel Agreements, rotational and developmental assignments, to attract and utilize expertise from other agencies, universities, and organizations to supplement needed resources.
- Establish technical specialist positions at the GS-13 grade level as appropriate.

Division Actions

- Sustain a robust Planning organization providing plan formulation, economic and environmental services with interdisciplinary Chief reporting to the DPPM.
- Continue effective quarterly review meetings with districts and with Planning Chiefs.
- Host division-wide policy and planning conferences to include HQUSACE participation, to discuss timely issues i.e., watershed studies, Section 1135/206 policies.
- Host, facilitate, or develop training programs, seminars, etc.
- Conduct an annual Policy Conference.
- Provide opportunity for developmental assignments.
- Develop NWD Planning achievement awards.
- Revise NWD guidance for processing project cost and schedule changes to minimize “paper traffic.”

HQUSACE Actions

- Delegate approval authority for 905(b) reports, and model PCA's .
- Review and certification of GI study FCSA/PSPs should be delegated to the Division Commander.

- The approval authority for all reports and projects completed under the small project environmental authorities, Section 1135 and Section 206, should be delegated to the Division Commander.
- Establish a “Small Projects” model PCA for projects with a Federal cost of \$300,000 or less.
- Expand Planning Web page to include case studies of innovative plan formulation efforts, Planner’s Bulletin Board for items of interest and E-mail discussion groups to address new initiatives and policy issues.
- Re-establish the Planners and Project Managers training program with central funding.
- The negotiation of non-model project cooperation agreements should be modified to include early discussions between sponsor and Washington Review Center decision-makers.
- Provide CECW-AR draft review comments on reports to division and districts for clarifying discussions that can result in deletion of comments in the final package and thereby save resources.

HQ, Division & District Actions

- Maintain a current list of AE contracts that any Corps office can access.
- Support developmental assignments within and between offices.
- Support executive development with other Federal Agencies.
- Reexamine the priority process in CAP to provide for more new starts to meet national needs.
- Cooperate in developing conferences, workshops, courses, etc., to meet needs for training and exposure to new and emerging policies and business practices.

POSTSCRIPT

The FAA Team sincerely believes that a robust planning organization in each district is critical to successfully addressing water resources problems and needs of the region of NWD. It appreciates the opportunity to perform this functional area analysis, and believes that the FAA Team should remain in force as a resource to the RMB, and that it should continue to examine opportunities for improvement in the planning process area, including business process improvements, staffing, organizational, regional, and training. The Team also believes that it should either take the lead on, assist, or facilitate the recommended actions.